



Montana

**Office of Public Instruction**

Denise Juneau, State Superintendent



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TO: Montana Educators  
FROM: Judy Snow, State Assessment Director  
RE: Smarter Balanced Professional Development Opportunities  
2013 Pilot Test Range Finding  
DATE: May 2013

Dear Educator,

The Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium and its vendor for the Range Finding project, CTB/McGraw-Hill, are seeking educators who meet the qualifications outlined below to serve as panelists for Range Finding activities beginning in June 2013.

- Are currently certified or licensed to teach ELA/literacy and/or mathematics in a K-12 public school.
- Are currently teaching in a public school or currently employed by a public school or district or state education entity located within a Smarter Balanced Governing State.
- Have taught ELA/literacy and/or mathematics in grades 3 through 8 and/or high school within the past three years or have worked in a classroom content support role such as a literacy or mathematics coach, district or state content specialist, etc.
- Have previously reviewed part or all of the Common Core State Standards for the content area in which they are interested in writing items and/or performance tasks.
- Have previous Range Finding (benchmarking) experience (preferred but not required).

Smarter Balanced is developing a common assessment system for mathematics and English Language Arts (ELA)/literacy that is aligned to the Common Core State Standards. The development involves educators, researchers, policymakers, and community groups in a transparent consensus-driven process to help all students strive for success in a global economy.

This spring, Smarter Balanced administered a Pilot Test of the assessment system to a sample of schools across the country. Through this Pilot Test, Smarter Balanced will gather information about the performance of assessment items and the test delivery system under real world conditions.

*The Montana Office of Public Instruction provides vision, advocacy, support, and leadership for schools and communities to ensure that all students meet today's challenges and tomorrow's opportunities.*

CTB/McGraw-Hill is recruiting educators to participate on Range Finding Committees to review student responses, recommend anchor papers, and validate rubrics from the Pilot Test. The committees will meet on-site for each Range Finding opportunity. Table 1 outlines the date and location of each Range Finding opportunity.

*Table 1: Range Finding Opportunities*

Content	Grades	Expected Meeting Dates	Location
ELA/Literacy	3-8, HS	June 24-27, 2013	Sacramento, CA
Mathematics	3-8, HS	June 24-27, 2013	Durham, NC

Range Finding supports the consistency and validity of scoring for the assessment. Specifically, Range Finding focuses on performance tasks for mathematics and ELA/literacy and includes

- the review of student responses against item rubrics,
- the validation of rubric effectiveness, and
- the selection of anchor papers used by handscoring for the larger population of responses.

**By Thursday, May 23, interested and qualified Montana educators should apply at the following link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/9LRJR99>**

Depending on the number of qualified applicants, OPI may close the application process before May 23, 2013.

CTB/McGraw-Hill will confirm educators to serve on the Range Finding Committees from across all Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium Governing States. The distribution of educators will represent a balance of geographic regions, grade levels, years of experience, and other data. The emails will be sent from CTB and Smarter Balanced with both names in the email address.

CTB will provide lodging, travel costs, and applicable reimbursements to each confirmed participant which may include substitute reimbursement or an honorarium. Additional travel and contract information will need to be completed for those educators confirmed.

## **Pilot Test Range Finding Educator FAQ**

Smarter Balanced is recruiting educators to serve as panelists for the spring 2013 Pilot Test Range Finding Committees.

### **Range Finding Committee Purpose**

Range Finding supports the consistency and validity of scoring for the assessment. Specifically, Range Finding focuses on performance tasks for mathematics and ELA/literacy and includes the following:

- The review of student responses against item rubrics,
- The validation of rubric effectiveness, and
- The selection of anchor papers used by hand scoring for the larger population of responses.

Participants selected to serve on a Range Finding Committee will review a sample of student responses from the Smarter Balanced pilot test administration. Participants will serve on specific grade-level and content area committees based on their expertise both in the classroom and from previous participation in Range Finding and scoring review within their state. Upon completion of this committee, the parameters defined by the educators will be used to score the remaining pilot test student responses. The review includes evaluation of rubrics against student responses to ensure standards alignment, breadth, and grade-level appropriateness.

### **Duration of Committee**

The Range Finding Committee will convene June 24–27 in two locations: Sacramento, CA, and Durham, NC. Educators will be expected to attend four days and will review responses with other educators to discuss scoring expectations and to define the anchors and rationale for scoring.

### **Logistics for Committee Meeting**

Once participants are selected and confirmed in late May, CTB/McGraw-Hill will provide expected attendees with information related to travel to the intended scoring site based on the grade-level and content area committee assigned. CTB/McGraw-Hill will provide lodging, travel costs, and applicable reimbursements to each participant. For educators, these reimbursements may include parking, meals outside of meeting, and substitute reimbursement.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Q: What is Range Finding?**

**A:** Range Finding participants work in groups assigned to grades and content areas. The process begins with an orientation. Panels will review the first assigned item-specific prompt or stem, rubric, and any associated stimuli as a group. The panels then review packets of responses in order to recommend “anchor papers” for each score point. Additionally, rubrics are evaluated against the anchor responses to ensure standards alignment, breadth, and grade-level appropriateness.

### **Q: What are the dates and length of review sessions?**

**A:** Range Finding will occur separately for ELA/literacy and mathematics. Each session lasts four days.

- ELA/literacy – Sacramento, CA: 06/24–06/27/2013
- Mathematics – Durham, NC: 06/24–06/27/2013

### **Q: How are educators selected for Range Finding participation?**

**A:** CTB/McGraw-Hill will confirm educators selected by the state to serve on the Range Finding Committees as participants or alternates from across all Smarter Balanced Governing States. The distribution of educators will represent a balance of geographic regions, grade levels, years of experience, and other demographic data.

### **Q: How and when will I know if I will be selected for Range Finding participation?**

**A:** Recruitment for Range Finding will occur across all Smarter Balanced Governing States. Selected participants and alternates will receive notification regarding their status of participation. The cycle for notification is outlined below:

- Notification email for educator participants and alternates: 06/05–06/12/2013
- Travel arrangements must be completed by: 06/14/2013

### **Q: Where does Range Finding occur?**

**A:** Range Finding for the pilot test occurs in-person. The sessions for ELA/literacy will be held in Sacramento, CA. The sessions for mathematics will be held in Durham, NC.

### **Q: Will my expenses be paid?**

**A:** CTB will pay airfare, hotel, and meal expenses for selected participants. Honorarium or substitute reimbursement may be available up to \$150/day.

### **Q: How much time can we expect to spend on this project in total?**

**A:** Each Range Finding opportunity will occur over a total of four workdays. The workday is approximately eight hours, with morning, lunch, and afternoon breaks.

### **Q: What items will we be Range Finding?**

**A:** The panels will perform Range Finding for a subset of performance tasks in mathematics and in ELA/literacy for grades 3–8 and high school.

**Q: What qualifications do I need to apply to participate in Range Finding?**

**A:** Participants must meet the following qualifications:

- Currently certified or licensed to teach ELA/literacy and/or mathematics in a K-12 public school. Currently teaching in a public school or are currently employed by a public school or district or state education entity, including higher education, located within a Smarter Balanced Governing State.
- Taught ELA/literacy and/or mathematics in grades 3–8 and/or high school within the past three years or have worked in a classroom content support role such as a literacy or mathematics coach, district or state content specialist, etc.
- Previously reviewed part or all of the Common Core State Standards for the content area in which they are interested in writing items and/or performance tasks.
- Previous Range Finding (benchmarking) experience (preferred but not required).

**Q: Are recently retired teachers eligible to participate?**

**A:** The Smarter Balanced Participant Qualification Guidelines define the following criteria:

- Currently certified or licensed to teach ELA/literacy and/or mathematics in a K-12 public school.
- Currently teaching in a public school or currently employed by a public school or district or state education entity located within a Smarter Balanced Governing State.

This requirement limits the participation of education employees to those who currently hold a position within an educational institution. Participation in this Range Finding opportunity is also meant to serve as a professional development activity for current school and district employees.

Please contact OPI with questions:

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